



# EQUALITY of OPPORTUNITY in EMPLOYMENT

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR, CANADA

The speeches contained in this booklet constituted a special series of broadcasts on the "CANADA AT WORK" radio program, which is produced by the Information Branch of the Department of Labour in Ottawa, and is heard each week in the year over 70 independent stations across Canada.



## Foreword


The Department of Labour in 1957 sponsored a third series of radio talks as part of its program to combat discrimination in employment because of race, national origin, colour or religion, and as a means of bringing to public attention the provisions of the Canada Fair Employment Practices Act which prohibit such unfair employment practices.

The first two series of radio talks were broadcast in 1954 and published in 1955 in a pamphlet "Do Unto Others . . .".

In organizing and planning the talks included in this new pamphlet, the Department received the enthusiastic co-operation of the five speakers, who freely contributed time and assistance and to whom our thanks are gratefully extended. In promoting the series of talks and giving them public distribution, the Department had the co-operation of labour and other organizations, for which we record our appreciation

In addition, the Department is grateful for the co-operation of the radio stations which carried these broadcasts free of charge on the Department's weekly "Canada at Work" program, as a public service to the Canadian communities they serve.

A. H. BROWN  
*Deputy Minister of Labour.*



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# Introduction to the Series

HONOURABLE MICHAEL STARR

Minister of Labour

The spread of enlightenment and the growth of democracy in the Western World are developments which began many years ago. However, I think it is helpful to have a look at these basic developments in the consideration of our present problem of prejudice and discrimination.

The two developments—the spread of enlightenment and the growth of democracy—are complementary to each other. When one of them has taken place in advance of the other, then it has usually brought a demand for the other. This is specifically true if the spread of enlightenment comes first—it is bound to be followed by a demand for democracy. History has shown, for example, that if people in the so-called lower classes acquire a knowledge of the rights and advantages of the privileged classes and the manner in which those rights and advantages are acquired and maintained, then they are certain to demand the same things for themselves. This is one of the things which took place in the beginning of the development of democracy as we know it today.

Another development which took place many years ago and which also has a bearing on our present problem was the increasing contact of western countries with people of other races, as well as between the western countries themselves. This development came following the improvement of methods of travel and communication between one part of the world and another. Previous to this development, it was not too difficult to maintain the intellectual position that people of other races were inferior merely because they were different. Hence, one group might be regarded as inferior because they practised a strange religion; another because their skins were of a different colour. However, as the increasing contact between the different races continued, many of these beliefs became so absurd that they could not be maintained without the believer appearing quite foolish. The idea that a person was inferior because of his strange religion became difficult to uphold when, for example, it became obvious that many of his characteristics indicating inferiority had nothing to do with religion, but were caused instead by poverty, hunger, or some other factor.

The same thing applied to the idea that people were inferior because their skin was brown or black. It soon became obvious that they could do all of the things white people could do when they were taught the necessary techniques, and that they were just as intelligent as anyone else if given an equal chance.

The interesting thing about all this as it affects the present, is that we tend to think of these developments as something which took place years ago. We tend too much to think of democracy as something that became complete when we obtained the right to vote. However, that is not quite the case. These

developments are still going on. In many of the western countries, especially in our own, democracy is still growing and it may be necessary for that growth to continue for some time. People in the minority groups may have achieved the right to vote, the right to free speech and so on, but unfortunately there are still many cases where they have not achieved the right to equal treatment in such things as housing accommodation, access to public places such as hotels and restaurants, and the right to an equal opportunity in employment.

The right to vote is very basic, but some of these other things are very important too, and unless they are shared equally by people of all races, religions and national origins, then we are quite safe in saying that democracy in Canada has a lot of growing to do.

Another very important point in the consideration of this problem is that you cannot deny employment justice to a man, when because he is living in a democracy, he has a whole list of other rights, and, because he is a reasonably enlightened man, he knows how to make use of those rights to further his case.

When the opponents of fair employment remain unconvinced by all the other arguments in its favour, then I still maintain this one essential basic point: *we can't turn back the clock*. It was a very long time ago that democracy started and it has come a long way. However, the essential thing to remember in considering the problem before us is that our contact with other races is still increasing, enlightenment is still spreading, and democracy is still growing, and to try to stop it is like Canute trying to hold back the tide.

For a minority worker the right to compete on a fair and equal basis for whatever employment opportunities are available is a very important thing, and you can be certain that he will fight just as hard for that right as our ancestors and his fought for the ones we already enjoy. He is no longer willing to bow and scrape.

The hard facts of this situation have been very much in evidence in North America recently, especially during the years since the war. We have found it necessary to pass legislation to guarantee minority workers the right to fair employment. In the United States a large number of fair employment laws have been put into effect and, I understand, they are working very well. In our own country the Canada Fair Employment Practices Act went into effect more than five years ago. The act applies to employers in undertakings under the jurisdiction of the Dominion Government and to trade unions representing workers employed in those undertakings. Some of the specific industries covered are shipping, navigation, railways, canals, telegraphs, airlines, banks, and radio and television broadcasting. Under the Act, an employer is forbidden to refuse to employ a person or to discriminate against an employee because of his race, religion, colour or national origin. An employer is also forbidden to use an employment agency which practises such discrimination or to use discriminatory advertising of employment vacancies, or to use discriminatory questions, written or oral, in connection with employment applications. The Act also forbids discriminatory practices by trade unions in regard to union membership and employment.



Fair employment laws of a similar type have also been passed by the legislatures of the provinces of Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

These laws are known in the legislative world as educational laws. Of course, all laws are educational to some extent, but these are a little different. The expressed purpose of most fair employment laws is to eliminate discrimination through educational methods if this is at all possible. It is only when the educational methods fail that the legal machinery to punish the offender is put into operation.

From the viewpoint of the administrator of a fair employment law, I must say that the more I see of patterns of discrimination and prejudice, the more I think that education in one form or another is the most necessary thing. I know that there are large numbers of companies in Canada where a fair employment policy is the rule because it has been insisted upon by management for some time. There are other cases where there is an official policy within the company of outright discrimination. However, these are certainly in the minority, and I think that it is a very small minority. There is a much larger group, in my opinion, in which there exists the regrettable situation that the company just does not have a policy as far as discrimination is concerned. The trouble with this group is that because there is no official policy, unfair employment practices are often going on unofficially without the president of the company knowing much about it. It may be on the level of the junior personnel officer or the bigoted clerk, but from the point of view of the minority worker who is barred from employment it is a policy and it is effective.

Obviously, it is possible for such a situation to exist without the president of a company knowing about it. In such a case the educational method required is quite obvious. It is merely necessary for the president to lay down a fair employment policy and to insist upon it being observed. Experience under various fair employment laws has shown that when such a course of action is taken by the president it invariably works. Employees, including employees who are bigoted on matters of race, religion and national origin, invariably do what they are told to do by the president in policy matters of this kind. Obviously, in most companies they would need to obey the president or they would be looking for employment elsewhere.

One of the most important problems faced by the departments of government which administer fair employment laws is the problem of getting the victims of discrimination to come forward with their complaints. It has often been noticed, especially in industries where discrimination has been known to exist for a long time, that complaints are not brought forward even though the existence of the fair employment law is well known. There are several reasons for this. Most people just seem to want to go about their daily business with as little fuss and bother as possible, and therefore, when they encounter discrimination they merely say to themselves, "it is there, it has been there for a long time, and there doesn't seem to be much we can do about it".

Another reason many people avoid making a complaint is that they are afraid of becoming involved in legal proceedings. There is also the fear that

the offending employer may retaliate against them in one way or another. To minority workers in this situation, I would say first of all that the Canada Fair Employment Practices Act contains a clause which specifically protects a person bringing forward a complaint against retaliation of any kind that may be taken against them as a result of that complaint.

You should remember that the prompt filing of complaints under fair employment laws has been known in many cases to bring about major changes in the employment policies of the industries affected. This, of course, is a real benefit to the minority workers concerned. In other words, I would say that these fair employment laws can in such situations be a direct benefit to you, to your family and other members of your minority group. No one wants to go around looking for trouble, and as the head of the department which administers the Canada Fair Employment Practices Act, I would not want to say that I was looking for more complaints—except in cases where the complaint is based upon a real grievance. If you have good reason for believing that you have been discriminated against, I assure you that the complaint will be promptly investigated and followed through to a just conclusion.

In this connection I would also like to mention that if you were to get in touch with representatives of organized labour to discuss with them the possibility of making a complaint, you are likely to find that they will be very helpful to you. In many parts of Canada there are in existence special labour committees which have devoted a good deal of time and effort to problems of prejudice and discrimination and which have done some very valuable work. These people have experience in this field and many of them are certainly well qualified to advise you.

Finally, I would like to say that much has already been done toward the elimination of discrimination in employment under the Canada Fair Employment Practices Act. When the influence of various provincial fair employment statutes is added to this, it must be quite considerable. Speaking for the Dominion field, I can say that the Canada Fair Employment Practices Act has worked, mainly because of the elements of persuasion which are included in its provisions for conciliation. So far it has not been necessary to carry any of the complaints which have been registered beyond the conciliation stage. The settlement of these complaints has not only brought about an improved situation in the industries concerned, but other situations which would have been the cause of additional complaints if it were not for the influence of the Act, have been avoided.

The number of cases investigated under the Act has not been large, but the long-term effects of some of these cases should not be underestimated. In some areas where prejudice and discrimination have in the past given rise to very difficult problems, new patterns and precedents have been established, breaking through the old barriers. Unfair employment practices no longer have the strength they once had in Canada, and I firmly believe that the avenues of the future should be increasingly open to employment policies which are more in accord with the ideals of freedom and democracy in Canada.



# The Roots and Causes of Prejudice

PROFESSOR MARCUS LONG

Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto

If by prejudice we mean the closed mind, the refusal to give a decent hearing to views with which we disagree, then we must recognize that prejudice is very much with us today. There are very few people who make any serious effort to understand the views of their opponents. There are far more who want to silence them.

I hasten to point out that this is nothing new. Giordano Bruno was burned to death in 1600 for ideas which would not raise an eyebrow today.

The history of science carries, besides the record of human triumph, the record of human prejudice, the story of the closed mind. The Copernican theory and the Darwinian theory are two outstanding examples of scientific insights which stirred up wrath. I must point out that this prejudice was not limited to the uneducated; some of the major opponents of scientific progress were scientists and philosophers.

Prejudice is not a monopoly of any particular group. Several important books have been written on this subject. Some of my listeners may be familiar with the delightful fictionalized account by MacKinlay Kantor of the development of medicine in the nineteenth century entitled "The Century of the Surgeon". This book was not intended as a record of prejudice and yet it is that. Each of the great advances in the field of surgery, including such simple suggestions as washing the hands in chlorinated water before examining or operating on patients, were derided and violently opposed by medical men. And who can forget the tragic but heartwarming story of the treatment given to Florence Nightingale during the Crimean war for instituting the measures we now take for granted from nurses.

But I'm not supposed to speak about prejudice as the closed mind against ideas. I have been asked to speak about the other sort of prejudice which is reflected in discrimination, the prejudice of people against people, the prejudice we find in Little Rock.

This sort of prejudice is not a modern invention. Prejudice against others is as old as history and likely as old as man. It would be difficult to find anyone not infected by it.

The people of India, for instance, who like to talk about the sufferings of coloured people under the rule of whites, have long suffered from caste distinctions within their own borders.

It is true that the government of India, like the government of the United States, is opposed to such discrimination. Unfortunately, the attitude of the



Indian government cannot affect the way people think and the persons, like the untouchables, who suffer from discrimination are not likely to get too much consolation from the thought that the Prime Minister of India doesn't like the way they are being treated. I emphasize that such discrimination is nothing new. The Athenian aristocrats despised the artisans and slaves. The early Hebrews seemed to despise everybody. Even the Apostle Peter was reluctant to preach the gospel to the Gentiles whom he considered unclean, and if the spread of Christianity had depended on him, Christianity would have died shortly after its birth.

If we are agreed, as I am sure we are, that prejudice is a very old and a very widespread emotional disease, we may turn to some of the reasons for its existence.

There is no doubt that one of the major reasons for prejudice is ignorance. This is most obvious if we think of the prejudice against ideas. The most vicious attacks against any system of thought are usually made by those who have never taken the time or given the effort to make a sympathetic appraisal of what they are attacking.

Again I hasten to point out that I am not expected to discuss prejudice in terms of ideas but only prejudice against persons. I'm quite sure that much of this is also based on ignorance. That is why travel is so important. Actual contacts between people can do much more to eliminate personal prejudice than a multitude of sermons.

In 1948 I had the privilege of bringing some Norwegian and Dutch students into contact with some Germans. The first week of the contact was as tense as anything I can recall. The Norwegians and the Dutch could only see in the Germans the people who had killed so many of their friends and caused so much suffering to themselves. Gradually barriers were broken down and contact established. The prejudice based on memory vanished before the reality of contact. Before the summer was ended one Norwegian, for instance, who had come to our gathering with the intention of hating the Germans, was engaged to a German girl.

Ignorance is a fertile source of prejudice. When you get to know Germans, Italians, Hungarians, Africans, Indians and other peoples, your imaginary pictures are sure to be changed for the better.

Of course it won't always work this way. Knowledge sometimes brings disillusionment. I can still recall the shock of watching two young men just outside Naples in Italy, young men obviously in the best of health and in their early twenties, walking nonchalantly along beside a woman who must have been in her sixties carrying a heavy piece of furniture on her back. This, I'm afraid, was typical of the treatment of women in that part of the country. I'm quite sure also that I should have difficulty appreciating the way of life of the underdogs in Middle East Countries. Some disillusionment is bound to happen. You have met Irishmen who were not witty and Scotsmen who were not tight; I mean in money matters. Usually, however, knowledge adds to finer appreciation. I suspect that if you tried to contact Jews and Negroes and all sorts

of other people you would find that many of your prejudiced opinions have no justification. Surprisingly enough you can find all sorts of nice and horrible people in all of these groups.

Here I cannot resist injecting a personal note. So often when people speak out against racial discrimination the prejudiced listener replies, "your deeds don't match your words, you would not want to live beside Jews or Negroes". Now it happens that I have spent most of my time in Toronto on two streets. My neighbours on the first street, moving towards the west, were Scots, Italians, Japanese and Jamaicans, in that order. On the east there were Greeks, French-Canadians and others. When I moved to my present home there was a Chinese family right across the road, and a Jewish family a few doors down. So far as I have been able to discover over the years, they have not infected my family with any social diseases, ruined their character or made my home an unsuitable place to live in. The little Jewish girl and my younger daughter play together and, on occasions even sleep together. They fight and make up like any other children.

This, I must confess, is quite different from what life was like in Belfast where I used to live. For in that city no Roman Catholic dared to live on a Protestant street and no Protestant dared to live on a Roman Catholic street. And bitterness was everywhere.

But enough about ignorance. The second reason for prejudice is fear, the fear that a minority group may swamp a majority group.

This is the only reason I can think of for the violent religious persecutions of the past, both Protestant and Catholic. Even though both groups claimed the assurance of God that not even the gates of Hell could prevail against them they refused to take any chances.

Fear is a very pervasive thing in all realms. The trade unions are not free from it. The leaders of the labour movement are among the most forceful of those who fight against discrimination on the basis of race, creed or political faith. Yet they have been unable to overcome the fear of many workers that D.P.'s and Hungarians would do Canadians out of jobs. It has been depressing to hear the criticisms that have come from working circles against the former Canadian government for giving a haven in Canada to Hungarian freedom fighters.

Fear, combined with ignorance, is at the root of the trouble in the Southern United States. Commentators have noted that the people with least prejudice are the people with secured positions or secure incomes. The so-called "white trash" are understandably afraid that the emancipated Negro might well threaten what economic security they have.

The third reason and the one I have been working towards is pride. Pride is not only a cardinal sin, it is, by any reckoning, the main basis for prejudice. It must also be noted that on occasions pride is a good thing.

No social group can endure unless its members are proud to belong to it. That is as true of a nation as it is of a service club. That is why we expect our schools and churches to bolster our national pride. It is unnecessary to dwell

on this point. The Scotsman has a sense of superiority, the Irishman has a sense of superiority, the Englishman has a sense of superiority, the French-Canadian has a sense of superiority. And so we all want legislation to protect our culture and our traditional institutions.

Now, it is obvious there is much merit in this attitude. A society, an ethnic group or a nation cannot maintain itself unless its members believe in it and are proud of it. They must oppose any attempt to change its character which is not rooted in their own volition. That, after all, is the basis of defensive war, the basis of the tribute we paid to heroes of former wars on November 11th.

Yet a sensible man ought to examine the basis for his pride. For the pride that maintains the unity of the nation may well mean a barrier to its progress.

Imagine an angel or a visitor from Mars examining the nations of our contemporary world. I think they would be surprised at the citizens of Saudi Arabia or Egypt or Morocco excluding ideas and assistance from outside because of their national pride, their sense of superiority. Pride is necessary. It can also be dangerous. It is dangerous when it becomes the basis of cruelty and injustice. The white people of the Southern United States are proud to be white. As a result they have been known to torture and lynch their fellow-Americans whose skin happened to be black. Many of these whites are presently resisting the law of their country to prevent coloured students from attending white schools.

There can be no justification in law or morality or religion for such actions. This is a false use of pride.

We fall into the same trap when we assume that our group is so superior to another group that it should be discriminated against. There is no justification for that. We must learn to respect differences and learn to live with them.

Prejudice and the personal discrimination which follows it are usually based on ignorance, fear and a distorted pride. This is hardly the basis for a sound approach. There are good and bad people in every religious, ethnic or political group. To distinguish between people simply on the basis of their religious, ethnic or political affiliations is as absurd as the action of the doctors who once refused to wash their hands before performing an operation.

If you must be prejudiced, and all of us are, base your prejudice on sensible grounds. Do not assume that because a person has a different coloured skin or disagrees with you on religious questions or happens to hold different political opinions that he is not a good Canadian or a good neighbour. There are better tests.

And do not raise your children on such absurd beliefs. For this, after all, is the major source of prejudice. Give them a chance to mingle with children who come from homes which represent different religious faiths, political opinions and various ethnic groups. Such contacts will not hurt them unless you have poisoned their minds.

This is so necessary in Canada which is still, because of language differences, two nations under a single federal government, a group of varied nationalistic



memories that have not yet risen beyond the pride of the past, to add the richness of their various cultures to the culture that will be Canada's.

If we must have pride let it be pride in Canada and not merely in a splinter group, if we must have fear let it be directed to those outside our boundaries. But let us have an end to ignorance, particularly within our own country. There is no proper place in Canada for discrimination based on prejudice.



# Fair Employment Practices—A Good Beginning

FRANK H. HALL

Chairman, Human Rights Committee, Canadian Labour Congress

The Canadian Fair Employment Practices Act, which has been on the statute books since May, 1953, is stated therein to be "An Act to Prevent Discrimination in Regard to Employment and Membership in Trade Unions by Reason of Race, National Origin, Colour or Religion." The legislators, consonant with a large section of public opinion, doubtless realized that such an enactment was elementary to both the material and spiritual well-being and growth of our country. Some of the provinces have adopted similar legislation.

The great family of National and International Trade Unions which now make up the Canadian Labour Congress welcomed the law, and, indeed, had been pressing for such legislation for many years. Insofar as the law applies to the labour movement, a provision of the Congress Constitution that one of the objects of the Congress is "To encourage all workers without regard to race, creed, colour or national origin to share in the full benefits of union organization" makes clear the position of organized labour.

Pursuant to this policy the Congress has set up a national Committee on Human Rights, and committees in provinces and major municipalities. The activities of these committees are quite varied within the whole field of human rights. Among other things, the law says in its section 4, under the heading "Prohibited Employment Practices":

"No employer shall refuse to employ or to continue to employ, or otherwise discriminate against any person in regard to employment or any term or condition of employment because of race, national origin, colour or religion.

"No employer shall use, in the hiring or recruitment of persons for employment, any employment agency that discriminates against persons seeking employment because of their race, national origin, colour or religion.

"No person shall use or circulate any form of application for employment or publish any advertisement in connection with employment or prospective employment or make any written or oral inquiry in connection with employment that expresses either directly or indirectly any limitation, specification or preference as to race, national origin, colour or religion unless the limitation, specification or preference is based upon a *bona fide* occupational qualification."

Whether through ignorance of the law or otherwise, there have been violations of these anti-discrimination provisions by some employers and some trade unions.



Many years ago Maclean's Magazine published an article on a test which was tried on 47 employers. Two young women, with almost identical qualifications were selected to answer advertisements for stenographers, typists, bookkeepers and filing clerks. One girl took the name of Greenberg, the other the name of Grimes. Forty-one out of the forty-seven employers offered appointments to Miss Grimes. Only seventeen out of the forty-seven offered an appointment to Miss Greenberg.

More recently two labour committees on human rights, one in Vancouver and one in Toronto, made small studies on the extent to which the Fair Employment Practices Act was being complied with by private firms in their employment application forms. In Vancouver, the committee found that 63 per cent of the companies asked questions about the applicant's nationality, 70 per cent asked his place of birth, 18 per cent asked his religion and 14 per cent asked his racial origin. These questions are deemed illegal under Fair Employment Practices legislation.

In Toronto, the committee found some 30 per cent of the firms—and these included insurance companies, banks, and manufacturing companies—had illegal questions on their job application forms.

Understandably these are small, very limited studies. But they provide an indication of the extent to which Fair Employment Practices laws are violated, and also of the lack of knowledge of the general public of the existence of anti-discrimination legislation.

We realize that, in a country as large as Canada, with its great number of minority groups, discrimination may operate against different minority groups in different areas. In the Maritimes, the discrimination against Negro job applicants is perhaps the most serious problem. In Central Canada discrimination may be directed against Jews and New Canadians, as well as against Negroes. In the Prairies, Indians who leave the reservations to participate or who attempt to participate in outside community life, may constitute the number one problem in this field. On the West Coast, Chinese-Canadians and Japanese-Canadians are probably more affected by discrimination in employment than in other areas. Education is another area that should be examined more closely. The Federal Department of Labour has made available some excellent pamphlets and booklets on the legislation and its operation. This radio series is another example of its educational program. The provincial agencies administering Fair Employment Practices laws should be prepared to obtain and make use of common educational material. At least some discussions on the subject would be of advantage to both federal and provincial agencies. The result would be more information, interestingly prepared, on the problem of discrimination in employment and fair practices laws, made available to wider sections of the Canadian public than has heretofore been the case.

There is a variety of experiences in the administration of Fair Employment Practices laws. The relations of our labour committee secretaries, when representing complainants, and dealing with the Federal Department of Labour, has been very good. In the cases, in which we have acted as adviser, our secretaries have felt that the Department officers have done their best to settle the cases and process them efficiently.

Federal Fair Employment Practices complaints, since the Act went into effect in 1953, have involved three types of discrimination:

1. The use of discriminatory questions in the employment application forms of firms under federal jurisdiction. These questions were usually dropped and new forms instituted when the matter was brought to the attention of the firm.

2. The denial of employment to applicants from minority groups. The complaints in this category are not very numerous. Where they have occurred they have been quickly settled by the conciliation and persuasion method. In British Columbia there were complaints about a telephone company's attitude and hiring policies toward Japanese and Chinese-Canadians, particularly for telephone operators. The management denied the charge and shortly thereafter employment ads for the company appeared in the Chinese and Japanese language press. In one case a branch bank manager in Victoria turned down a Jewish applicant for a position in the bank.

3. The denial of promotion to qualified applicants from minority groups. In almost all cases, complaints under this heading have been against railroads, and involved charges of discrimination because of colour. The cases against a railway for denial of promotions to qualified porters who applied for sleeping car conductors' jobs, were settled after considerable discussion and resulted in the historic hiring of the first Negro sleeping car conductors on Canadian railroads.

The Congress and its Human Rights Committees hold that the test of employee eligibility should be ability of the applicant to do the job efficiently. This, surely, is the intent of the law. Refusal of job referral, or employment, on ground of colour, race or creed, violates that intent and outrages the sensibilities of the individuals concerned as well as of all well-meaning people.

An encouraging feature is that the great body of employers want to comply with the law. Employment application forms which formerly required statement of racial origin and other such objectionable particulars have been changed to conform with the statute.

Quite recently the National Committee met with The Honourable Michael Starr, Minister of Labour, and certain of his departmental officers, for a broad discussion of prohibited employment practices and incidents related thereto. We were assured of the government's intention to strictly enforce the law and related regulations, these being administrated by the Department of Labour, and we are consequently confident of full official cooperation and ultimate success of the purposes of the legislation.

As all men are equal in the mind of the Creator, and equal before our laws, so must they have equality in our social, industrial and economic life. This is implicit in the Fair Employment Practices Act.

Canada is still a young country, already great in the eyes of the world, respected by all. No one can doubt that its destiny is to become even greater—to be a leader among the nations, accepted as such by peoples of all colours, races and creeds because of the example we will have set within our own community and lives.





# Is Fair Employment Good Business?

HERBERT H. LANK, President,  
The Du Pont Company of Canada (1956) Limited, Montreal

The basis of our civilization is faith in God and in the dignity of man, without distinction of creed or race. Having said that, let me state another obvious fact: business and industry, no less than other sectors of our society, owe a primary allegiance to this principle. Equality of opportunity to secure a livelihood seems as logical as equality of opportunity to secure an education, to self-improvement. But fair employment is not only a moral obligation; it is, I am convinced, good business sense.

I think we can say that Canadians, on the whole, have the opportunity to develop and use their talents. Probably this is one of the major factors in explaining the great strides we have made in increasing our national health and well-being.

Progress, good-will and teamwork go hand in hand. Prejudice, of whatever kind, could endanger that teamwork.

In this country we have few of the racial hostilities and problems we see in some other areas; but as employers—as well as citizens—we must guard against complacency in this field and correct errors as they appear. Let me indicate at random one potential danger area:

Since the end of World War II, immigration has added approximately 1,500,000 to our population, including 200,000 children born to immigrants. To maintain our social and economic progress, Canada needs all the manpower, all the brain-power it can get. Of this host of newcomers only slightly more than one-quarter is made up of British or French stock. The ethnic pattern of Canada is thus changing. It is rapidly becoming a racial mosaic of great and valuable diversity. What this influx has meant to all of us in terms of national development is obvious. In the ten years' period from 1946, immigrants who joined our labour force numbered nearly half a million—or more than the whole increase from other sources. If it were not for that immigration, our labour force would have been drastically short of our needs because of our industrial expansion. Here business and industry have a special interest and obligation as the flow of immigration continues. They must ensure that the principle of fair employment is translated into reality and that no one is denied his basic right to equal opportunity by being labelled "different". Yet the problem is sometimes more difficult than appears on the surface.

I should like you to imagine, for instance, the dilemma of the manager of a large mining company with whom I talked not long ago. Sharing in the economic boom there, you will find large numbers of recent immigrants, chiefly miners from Italy, Germany and Eastern Europe. Their skill makes a substantial

contribution to the mineral wealth of this whole country. Yet the presence of so many New Canadians posed unexpected problems. In mining operations strict adherence to safety regulations ensures safety for all. But few of these new employees were able to speak or read either French or English. Where would you draw the line if you barred people because of their language? Eventually this particular management got around this difficulty by posting their safety instructions in half a dozen languages and using interpreters. In such a situation language is as important a tool as pick and shovel.

We in business and industry must realize that the pattern of our population is constantly changing. Employment practices must keep pace. As employers we must ask ourselves whether, because of tradition, seniority or other reason, we tend to adhere to employment patterns which are too rigid.

But discrimination against racial, religious and language groups is not the only type of discrimination we must all guard against. Business and industry do not exist in a vacuum, separated from the community as a whole. They are an integral part of the community. If prejudices of various kinds exist in a plant or office, they are usually an indication that the same prejudices and discriminations exist in the community as a whole. Fair employment practices and union co-operation can reduce incidents and minimize discriminatory actions; but they alone will rarely re-educate the individual worker.

Management knows that fair employment policies are essential if it is to operate effectively, which means operate with the wholehearted participation of its employees. For this reason, management emphasizes sound personal and inter-group relations. There must be assurance that ability and character are the sole criteria for employment and advancement.

It is in the community, and even in the classroom, that the ugly pattern of racial, religious and social class prejudice is most likely to warp the individual's mind. Prejudice leads to needless conflict and tensions between individuals and between groups; tensions are dangerous and wasteful to society. Education and the community as a whole have a *basic* responsibility to help prevent growth of prejudices. At the same time business must share responsibility for the sociological context in which it operates. Furthermore, as the complex structure of business and industry today depends increasingly on teamwork, we simply cannot afford the tensions which inevitably build up within any organization that allows prejudice to play a part in its operations.

I will give you one isolated example to show that prejudice against color, creed or nationality must be the concern of the community.

Not long ago a Canadian manufacturer was anxious to employ a group of highly-skilled Canadians of Japanese ancestry in a small town. Although the town showed no open hostility towards this group, employment of these workers became impossible because there just wasn't a home or rooming-house willing to accommodate them. Here you have a group of people being rejected by the community, *not* by the employer who needed their services.

This brings me to the high cost of prejudice, which a sound business system cannot tolerate. If examples such as the one I have quoted were to be multiplied,

the cost to our economy in lost productivity could be staggering. If, by such discrimination, we limit the number of people who produce goods, the number of people who can supply inventions and ideas for better production, then we limit the goods that can be made, sold and bought. We would limit employment and wages.

The area where such waste could occur is practically unlimited. During the war, for instance, the armed forces needed an efficient way to store and distribute blood plasma. Dr. Charles R. Drew, an American Negro, came up with a plan that must have saved tens of thousands of lives. Or think of the polio vaccine, which has saved so many lives in recent years—of the children who might have died from this disease if anti-Semitism had prevented Dr. Salk from acquiring his skills.

We in this country must make sure that we do not pass up a single scientific or industrial advance because schools refuse training or business refuses employment or advancement, on the basis of colour of the skin, shape of the nose, religion, nationality or other “different” background. The loss to our economy as a whole would be enormous, to say nothing of the obvious and more important harm done to some of our fellow citizens.

We are fortunate in this country because we do not have a major problem in this area. But we are not completely free of fault; and we do need constant vigilance to prevent it from developing. You and I for instance, might well examine the meaning of some words we may have come to use unthinkingly. We might re-examine our own attitudes and emotional reactions, as they are the powerful forces behind our behaviour.

Sociologists have said that “discrimination is prejudice acted out”. When you have prejudice actively expressed and applied, then you have discrimination. It expresses itself in the unjust barring of certain persons from jobs, from advancement in jobs, from certain residential areas, educational and cultural opportunities and the like. Such discrimination is a form of social “bullying” which transposes a sense of insecurity, injustice or other forms of frustration and directs them against another group less able to defend itself.

Discrimination is generally overt and so can be legislated against. Here in Canada, for instance, we have set an example with the Canada Fair Employment Practices Act. This applies to federal government work and its suppliers.

Prejudice, by contrast, cannot be legislated against. It is more subtle, often even subconscious, and to combat it we must cleanse our own minds. It is the more dangerous, more destructive and certainly the more common of the two. A prejudiced person is fundamentally an irrational and unintelligent person, a person who refuses to consider all the facts before he forms an opinion.

That kind of distorted judgment is not inborn in human nature. It develops out of personal and informal contacts within the family, the school, the community. People who are constantly exposed to prejudices in their surroundings, tend to absorb and accept them as their own, often unthinkingly.

The causes of prejudice are based chiefly on a false belief in the inferiority of certain groups on racial, physical, intellectual, cultural or religious grounds.



Fear may enter into it. Some believe that prejudice is based entirely upon ignorance, but this is not necessarily so. Knowledge is useful, but the college graduate and the graduate of the school of hard knocks may both be active bigots. Learning facts is not enough. To overcome the emotional basis of prejudice, practical experience with others of different ethnic, racial or religious groups, day-by-day, is also necessary. Activity in inter-group relations not only in the community, but also in the plant or office, could well be an effective means of demolishing the myth of the inherent superiority of one group over another.

Business is demolishing some long-established prejudices, because it cannot spare any man or woman who is qualified to do a given job well. Progress is being made. Age, for instance, is less of an obstacle than it was a few years ago. Positions once considered the exclusive domain of the technical expert have been opened to non-technical people. Graduates in liberal arts are accepted rather than shunned—women are making notable contributions on practically all levels of business and industry today.

All these gains represent the gradual breaking down of an irrational attitude which prejudices a person as a member of a group (by age, academic training, or sex) rather than on individual merit.

We live in a world which has made great material advances, a world in which every point on the globe, and some even beyond the earth's atmosphere, are but a few hours away from man. If we cannot pull down these barriers in a community, or in a business organization, we surely cannot achieve the universal brotherhood of man which is the challenge of our times.

Perhaps I can best close by quoting to you from someone who is concerned about the same problems I have tried to discuss—but on a more universal scale. S. Radhakrishnan, the President of India, made a statement which we might all keep in mind:

“Human unity depends, not on past origins, but on future goals and directions—on what we are becoming and whither we are tending.”

# Prejudice—A Spiritual Pestilence

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Some time ago, I read that an American public health expert urged the Episcopal Church to abandon the practice of drinking from the same Communion cup. He suggested instead a method known as "intinction", dipping the bread into the wine, whereby both elements in the Communion are administered at once. His reason for the change was the risk of infection. "People taking Communion are in danger if they use the common cup . . ."

This item set me to pondering about routine measures to combat germs. For example, Canadian cattle are protected against hoof-and-mouth disease by rigid inspection at the border. The campaign to conquer tuberculosis is directed toward safety from microbes which may lurk in drinking-cups and towels. In warm weather, parents cower before the virus of infantile paralysis. I recently saw an ad in a trolley-car asking people with colds to sneeze into their handkerchiefs, so that others may be shielded from contagion in the air.

Why does man fear the microscopic germ? Because it spreads invisibly from person to person, multiplying at incredible speed and ravaging the bodily tissues. One other striking fact: germs are democratic! They make no distinctions and recognize no boundary lines. Once a plague breaks loose, no household remains aloof or secure.

Do you realize that a pestilence can be spiritual, as well as physical? Are not wrong ideas powerful? Do they not propagate, and leap from mind to mind, from heart to heart?

Consider the incalculable harm that religious bigotry has done, and is still doing, the human family. Now, bigotry may begin with piety, a profound, sincere regard for one's religion. That may develop into a feeling that one church alone is right, and others are false, bred by the Devil. Then pride takes over, and a malignant growth starts, and before long love for one's own faith sickens into hate for the other fellow's faith.

There isn't anything a bigot won't believe—as long as it discredits and defames some group he doesn't like. He holds that group responsible for every fault and disaster. Centuries ago, the Christians of Rome were thrown to the lions in the arena whenever the Tiber overflowed, or a drought withered the crops. In 1348, thousands of Jews were slaughtered in Europe because they were blamed for the Black Plague which swept across the Continent with an iron broom of death and desolation. Just yesterday, it seems, the Puritans of New England drove out Roger Williams because his heresy endangered the state.

Today, people everywhere who started out with deep, intense loyalty to their own religion, and all the kindness and comfort it brought them, are being warped into sour, narrow-minded bigots. After being infected by their friends or parents (as children sometimes are, unfortunately), they in turn convey the sickness to others. Is a spiritual epidemic less harmful than a plague of the body? Can the individual or the social fabric thrive in an atmosphere of mutual hostility and suspicion? When the stream of hatred begins to flow from one person to the next, it overflows its original channel and spreads its havoc far and wide. Today it may engulf the Jew; yesterday it brought peril to the Catholics; the day before, its martyrs were the Quakers, Unitarians, Huguenots. This very moment, the fatal cycle may begin.

Remember, my friends: hate never rests! Hate never rests! It is a dynamic, out-moving, explosive force. Was that not demonstrated by Nazi Germany? In preparing for war, the Germans became a morally diseased nation; their illness was anti-Semitism, whose seeds had been implanted on fertile ground by Nazi propaganda. Its first victims were the Jews, less than one per cent of the population. But during the War, Nazi Germany's hatred spilled over against the Poles, Greeks, French, British, Russians, Americans—against Catholic priests and Protestant ministers who opposed its will—against all mankind. That was bigoted hate gone berserk!

Do you recall the building of the Panama Canal? Some of you may be old enough. Before Colonel Goethals could complete that colossal task, he had a job of sanitation. The entire region, you see, was infested with yellow fever. Did he concern himself only with the health of his engineering staff? Do you suppose that he neglected the Indians and common laborers? . . . He fought yellow fever wherever he found it, among ranking officers and buck privates, illiterate coolies and university technicians; until then, no one would be safe, from its killing touch. To build a canal, he cleaned out the fever . . . If we are to build a nation, a democratic commonwealth that will be enduring and unshakable, our first job is to eradicate the spiritual pestilence of religious and racial prejudice, this blinding, delirious fever, wherever it exists.

The ancient Romans regarded bridge-building as a sacred pursuit. That is evident from the name they gave the priest: "pontifex", or bridge-maker. Newspapers often describe the Pope, Holy Father of all Catholics, as Supreme Pontiff, from the Latin word "pontifex". Cannot each one of *us* be a priest in that definition? A *bridge-builder*—a *bridge-builder*—one who spans the gap between ourselves and persons of other creeds!

Not long ago, a Gallup Poll was taken in eleven nations. The questioners asked, "Do you believe in God?" Canada tied with Australia for second place in the proportion of its inhabitants who answered yes. According to the Poll, 95 per cent of the people in this Dominion are God-believers. Quite probably, everyone of you listening to me now nourishes that faith in his heart. What does the voice of God whisper to you? Listen to Him, in the secret chambers



of your spirit, where only you—and God—may enter. Ask Him—*now!* Will God recommend religious bigotry? Will He tell you that some are chosen for His love, and others denied it? Will He sneer, or whisper stupid accusations, or indulge in irresponsible and unworthy gossip? . . . Or will He lave the wounds and hurts of all men in His enveloping affection, and say to you: “My child, I know not Gentile or Jew, Catholic or Protestant. *In Me, mankind is one*”.

Think, my friends, what man's intellect has achieved in our time! The vast outer world of ethereal space, stretching to infinity, and the mysterious force of the atom, so infinitesimal that the strongest microscope cannot view it—these are yoked together to our desires. The sputnik may lead mankind to the conquest of other planets! But what of the world *inside ourselves*? What can we do with our hate and prejudice? Don't we have to admit: *Science has advanced, morals lag behind*—and within that empty space mankind will perish by its own hand, unless we bring our morals up to date and practise the brotherhood of real religion . . . Every faith has *a* truth; only God has *the* truth!

The sands of time are running out. A race between conscience and catastrophe, with Death holding the stop-watch—that's our situation today. If we human creatures don't learn to live together, and overcome the boundaries of creed, color, nation, our own selfishness—we shall not be able to live *at all*. Before we begin to wonder about spacemen, we must dwell amicably with earth-men!

An urgent example of our challenge is the right of everyone to a job, without handicap of race, colour or creed. Are we not proud of free enterprise, prepared to defend it? Do we not regard Communism as the enemy of Western society because it rules out individual differences and effort, forcing everyone into the same mould? Here, by discriminating against job-seekers on grounds of colour or creed, businessmen themselves cut at the root of capitalism. If a man's value to an employer is limited by the birthplace of his parents, the blackness of his face, or the name of his faith, the person himself becomes meaningless, along with the whole *philosophy of free enterprise*.

A job is not a table at a swanky club or an invitation to a party. It means life, the security and self-respect of one's family. The right to work in a job according to capacity and character is no less fundamental than the right to worship God according to conviction. When people are thrust into low-scale wages, poverty, frustration, for no other reason except an accident of birth, then entire classes are doomed, damned and disinherited; it is a caricature of democracy.

Too many of us act on the assumption that Communism can be conquered without cost to ourselves, even the sacrifice of pet prejudices. If we want to save our Western civilization, we must make it civilized! And if we want to prove that we really intend to fight bigotry, here is the test! By giving jobs to all on an equal footing, regardless of color or creed, then we can give meaning to our religion—not as an excuse for intolerance, but as a basis for brotherhood.

W. E. B. DuBois, the Negro author, condensed the hunger of our time into a few lines:

“Herein lies the tragedy of the age!  
Not that men are poor;  
All men know something of poverty.  
Not that men are wicked;  
Who is good?  
Not that men are ignorant;  
What is truth?  
Nay, but that men should know so little of each other”.





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